Those Things'll Kill You

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Summary

Ryuko can't sleep...but neither can Satsuki

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

She squinted as she took a long drag on the cigarette, watching the end flare, illuminating the tip of her nose in the darkness. She tilted her head back and exhaled slowly. A long column of smoke curling in on itself and slowly drifting away in the warm lazy summer nights breeze. Thin clouds ghosted over the full moon and Ryuko sighed into the darkness. It was the fourth night in a row she had visited the early hours of the morning and she knew exactly why.

She flicked the cigarette over the railing of the third floor balcony taking extra care to put as much force behind it as possible. There could be no evidence. Since moving in with her sister a few months ago, she had managed to keep her despicable habit a secret. She needed to quit anyway, it wasn't as cool as she thought it would make her look. She closed her eyes and let her head fall back again as her thoughts drifted to where they always went. Satsuki had been acting weird lately. Probably just a reaction to the fact that Ryuko herself had been acting weird lately. The small swarm of butterflies that seemed to take up residence in her stomach whenever she was around her sister had turned into a raging beast now that they lived together.

For the last few nights, Ryuko had spent these few hours she was awake trying to talk her way out of it and when she failed miserably, she tried to justify it. She couldn't help that for the first year they knew each other they had no idea they were related. She couldn't help that, in spite of all the rivalry between them in the beginning, she always found Satsuki attractive. She couldn't shake the way Satsuki made her incredibly nervous and completely calm at the same time. She nearly choked on her lunch when Satsuki proposed Ryuko move into her apartment and Satsuki wouldn't take no for an answer. Something about ever since the life fiber crisis they hadn't been in contact enough and insisted that it was Satsukis responsibility to look after her. Ryuko had been avoiding Satsuki for fear of exactly this happening.

Ryuko could feel the tension growing between them over the last week. She wondered if Satsuki knew her dark secret. She lit up another cigarette and started going over all the little moments that added to the strain. The moments that Satsuki held her gaze just a little longer than usual, always something knowing behind the sapphire eyes that made the beast in Ryuko's stomach roar uncontrollably. The time at the diner when they both reached for the salt, hands colliding, and both recoiling as if burned by the touch. She could have sworn she saw, out of the corner of her eye, Satsuki staring at her as they watched TV the night before. The way the heat rose in Ryuko's face and she stupidly muttered about having to pee as she nearly bolted to the bathroom before Satsuki could see the blush.

Then there was tonight. Satsuki always went to bed early but tonight she stayed up until Ryuko yawned and mumbled about going to bed. Ryuko couldn't help but stare as Satsuki stretched and mirrored the yawn. The way every muscle in her body flexed and her back curved in a graceful arc with the stretch. Ryuko took care to shake the dumbstruck look off of her face before Satsuki opened her eyes. They both walked down the hall and stood in the doorway to their respective rooms across from one another. Ryuko nervously scratched the back of her head and quietly said goodnight to the floor. Satsuki just stood in the doorway and stared what felt like holes into Ryuko's soul. It took every ounce of strength Ryuko had to look up at her sister and when she did it was all she could do just to remember to breathe.

After a few seconds that seemed like a lifetime, Satsuki softly smiled and bid Ryuko a goodnight as well. There was something almost expectant in the way her sister stayed where she stood in the doorway in spite of their exchanged farewells. It made the beast in Ryukos stomach growl a low drawn out snarl as it flared to life. For a fraction of a second she thought she saw something like disappointment flash across her sisters eyes. Those eyes like endless blue oceans and Ryuko had to turn away into her room before she drowned in them. She shut the door as gently as she could and slid down to the floor against it, hands tearing at her hair and internally screaming at herself.

The cigarette in her hand had burned itself down to the filter while she was lost in her thoughts. Annoyed at wasting it, she flicked the butt over the rail again with extra force. Looking up at the night sky again, she quickly found her favorite one. Betelgeuse, the very top of the Orion constellation. The red star in a sea of twinkling blue ones. It was her favorite because it reminded her of the single red streak in her hair. She absentmindedly twirled the red streak as she lost herself in thought again. She was being stupid. She was just over thinking things because she wanted it so badly. She knew deep down that it would never happen. Instead of facing the harsh reality of things she was just projecting her own feelings onto her sister. None of it really meant anything. She sighed again and shook the train of thought away. The beast in her stomach whimpered feebly and clawed at her insides as she tried to push the thoughts from her mind. One more cigarette, then she needed to go back to bed. Satsuki would be awake in just a few hours. She put the cigarette to her lips and flicked the lighter to life but before she could bring the two together a voice spoke softly in her ear.
"You know, you're not the only one who can't sleep about it." Satsuki was inches away from her ear. Ryuko jumped so hard the cigarette flew out of her mouth and when she turned to face her, Satsuki pressed her lips to Ryukos. The beast inside her purred softly as her eyes rolled back against closed lids. Time stood still and everything was spinning. It was only a few short seconds before Satsuki pulled away but for Ryuko it could have been several centuries.
"S-Satsuki...wha-" Ryuko couldn't find words and Satsuki saved her from the stuttering mess she had become.
"Come with me. We'll talk more about this in the morning but for now we need to sleep." Ryuko swallowed hard and followed Satsuki back into the apartment and into her sisters room. They got under the covers and Ryuko lay tucked under Satsuki's chin. Satsuki stroked her hair for a moment and it didn't take long for Ryuko to fall into the best sleep she'd gotten in months.

End Notes

This is the obligatory "this is my first work and it's probably a piece of shit" sentence. Just be gentle, it's my first time. heh.

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